

The libralulu medical group, inc.

August 26, 1985

Harold E. Varmus, M.D.
University of California, S.F.
School of Medicine
Dept. of Microbiology &
Immunology
San Francisco, CA 94143

RE: Taxonomy on the AIDS virus

Dear Dr. Varmus,

Thank you for your letter of August 12th inquiring about my thoughts regarding a name for the "AIDS virus". The word "AIDS", comes with much political, media and psychological "baggage"; I shy away from using that name ("AIDS virus") when discussing the virus with patients. As of today, I have been involved directly with the diagnosis and/or care of 17 patients with AIDS, and have 80 or so other immune compromised patients in my practice. I use the abbreviations HTLV-III and/or LAV in describing to patients the cause for their immune compromised status. People seem to accept this complex medical term (HTLV-III or LAV) without too much panic; then I go on to explain that it "plays the major role" in developing the disease we refer to as "AIDS" - and that "AIDS" is an umbrella term for a disease that presents in many ways.

It is my personal conviction that the word "AIDS" should be left out of the name for this virus.

Sincerely,

David Mc Ewan MD

David B. McEwan, M.D. Chief, Family Medicine

DBM:ee